

Message Text

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PAGE 01 GUATEM 01614 260401Z

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ACTION NODS-00

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FM AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 518

C O N F I D E N T I A L GUATEMALA 1614

NODIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: OVIP (KISSINGER, HENRY A.), GT

SUBJECT: SECRETARY'S MEETING WITH PRESIDENT OF GUATEMALA:
BELIZE DISPUTE

1. AT THE CONCLUSION OF PRIVATE CONVERSATION BETWEEN PRESIDENT LAUGERUD AND SECRETARY FEB 24, THEY WERE JOINED BY ASSISTANT SECRETARY ROGERS AND AMBASSADOR MELOY. SECRETARY TOLD ASSISTANT SECRETARY AND AMBASSADOR THAT PRESIDENT LAUGERUD HAD EXPLAINED HIS VIEWS ON BELIZE AND THE PROBABLE REACTIONS OF GUATEMALA SHOULD THE UK GRANT INDEPENDENCE TO BELIZE UNILATERALLY. PRESIDENT NOTED THAT GUATEMALA HOPED TO RESUME TALKS WITH THE UK IN THE NEAR FUTURE, PERHAPS IN MARCH, BUT REMAINED DEEPLY CONCERNED THAT UK MIGHT AT ANY TIME INITIATE PROCESS OF INDEPENDENCE FOR BELIZE PRIOR TO REACHING A NEGOTIATED SOLUTION WITH GUATEMALA. AMBASSADOR ADDED THAT FOREIGN MINISTER HAD TOLD HIM GOG INTENDS TO APPROACH THE UK IN EARLY MARCH WITH A VIEW TO SETTING A DATE FOR THE TALKS TO RESUME IN APRIL, AFTER EASTER.

2. SECRETARY SAID THAT UK IS NOT GOING TO ACT UNTIL PROPOSED TALKS WITH GOG HAVE RUN THEIR COURSE. THE PRESIDENT INTERJECTED THAT HE HOPED SO. SECRETARY SUGGESTED PRESIDENT NOT RUSH THE RESUMPTION OF NEGOTIATIONS. GUATEMALA SHOULD WAIT UNTIL LATE APRIL OR EVEN MAY BEFORE RESUMING TALKS. THIS IS NO TIME FOR A SHOWDOWN. GUATEMALA IS IN NO CONDITION TO FACE A BREAKDOWN OF NEGOTIATIONS. IT WOULD THEREFORE BE BETTER TO POSTPONE THEM AS LONG AS POSSIBLE. UNDER THE
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CIRCUMSTANCES THIS WOULD NOT BE REGARDED AS AN INDICATION

OF WEAKNESS.

3. SECRETARY CONTINUED THAT US WILL NOT TRY TO FORCE THE UK TO DO ANYTHING AND IS NOT RPT NOT GOING TO MEDIATE THE DISPUTE,

BUT WE WILL USE OUR GOOD OFFICES. THE SECRETARY SAID HE WELL SPEAK TO THE BRITISH. WE WILL TRY TO ENCOURAGE THE BRITISH TO FIND A NEGOTIATED SOLUTION.

4. THE SECRETARY SAID THAT DURING HIS CONVERSATION WITH THE PRESIDENT THE PRESIDENT HAD INDICATED IN CONFIDENCE HE DID NOT EXPECT TO GET FROM THE BRITISH ALL THAT GUATEMALA WAS ASKING. THE PRESIDENT CONFIRMED THIS, SAYING THAT GUATEMALA, HOWEVER, MUST START OUT WITH A GOOD BARGAINING POSITION.
MELOY

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